

12874

## PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

PCT

NOTIFICATION OF ELECTION  
(PCT Rule 61.2)

From the INTERNATIONAL BUREAU

To:

Commissioner  
US Department of Commerce  
United States Patent and Trademark  
Office, PCT  
2011 South Clark Place Room  
CP2/5C24  
Arlington, VA 22202  
ETATS-UNIS D'AMERIQUE

in its capacity as elected Office

Date of mailing (day/month/year) 14 May 2001 (14.05.01)	To:
International application No. PCT/IB00/01345	Applicant's or agent's file reference 1999CH023
International filing date (day/month/year) 22 September 2000 (22.09.00)	Priority date (day/month/year) 23 September 1999 (23.09.99)
Applicant SCHÖFBERGER, Georg et al	

1. The designated Office is hereby notified of its election made:

in the demand filed with the International Preliminary Examining Authority on:

03 April 2001 (03.04.01)

in a notice effecting later election filed with the International Bureau on:

\_\_\_\_\_

2. The election  was

was not

made before the expiration of 19 months from the priority date or, where Rule 32 applies, within the time limit under Rule 32.2(b).

The International Bureau of WIPO 34, chemin des Colombettes 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland Facsimile No.: (41-22) 740.14.35	Authorized officer Juan Cruz Telephone No.: (41-22) 338.83.38
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03.OCT.2000

## PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

CONFIRMATION COPY

PCT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF  
DOCUMENTS FILED WITH THE  
INTERNATIONAL BUREAU  
AS RECEIVING OFFICE

Date of mailing (day/month/year)	22 September 2000 (22.09.00)	Facsimile No.: + +41 61 469 6588
Applicant's or agent's file reference	1999CH023	
International application No.	Date of receipt (day/month/year)	
PCT/IB00/01345	22 September 2000 (22.09.00)	
Applicant	CLARIANT FINANCE (BVI) LIMITED et al	
Title of the invention	LIGHTFASTNESS-IMPROVEMENT OF DYEINGS ON ALUMINIUM OXIDE LAYERS	

1. The International Bureau has received the documents/elements listed below on: 22 September 2000 (22.09.00) by the following means: surface mail (registered)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PCT Request	(4 pages)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> description (excluding sequence listing part)	(12 pages)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> claims	(2 pages)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> abstract	(1 page)
<input type="checkbox"/> drawings	
<input type="checkbox"/> sequence listing part of description	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fee calculation sheet	
<input type="checkbox"/> separate authorization to charge deposit account	
<input type="checkbox"/> cheque	
<input type="checkbox"/> cash (in person only)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> power(s) of attorney (copy of general power: 2; separate power: 1)	
<input type="checkbox"/> statement(s) explaining lack of signature	
<input type="checkbox"/> priority document	
<input type="checkbox"/> separate indications concerning deposited micro-organism or other biological material	
<input type="checkbox"/> nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence listing on diskette	
<input type="checkbox"/> statement(s) accompanying diskette(s) containing sequence listing	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> accompanying letter (1)	
<input type="checkbox"/> form PCT/RO/198 (RO/IB)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PCT-EASY diskette	
<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify):	

The applicant's attention is drawn to the fact that these papers have not yet been checked by this receiving Office in respect of their compliance with the requirements of Article 11(1), that is, whether these papers meet the requirements necessary for the according of an international filing date. As soon as these papers have been checked, the applicant will be informed accordingly.

2. Additional observations (if necessary):

Name and mailing address of the receiving Office	Authorized officer
International Bureau of WIPO PCT Receiving Office Section 34, chemin des Colombettes, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland Facsimile No. (41-22) 910 06 10 (Groups 3 and 4)	 Agnes Wittmann-Regis Telephone No. (41-22) 338 90 33

## PARENT COOPERATION TREATY

## PCT

## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

(PCT Article 18 and Rules 43 and 44)

Applicant's or agent's file reference <b>1999CH023</b>	<b>FOR FURTHER ACTION</b> see Notification of Transmittal of International Search Report (Form PCT/ISA/220) as well as, where applicable, item 5 below.	
International application No. <b>PCT/IB 00/01345</b>	International filing date (day/month/year) <b>22/09/2000</b>	(Earliest) Priority Date (day/month/year) <b>23/09/1999</b>
Applicant <b>CLARIANT FINANCE (BVI) LIMITED et al.</b>		

This International Search Report has been prepared by this International Searching Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 18. A copy is being transmitted to the International Bureau.

This International Search Report consists of a total of 2 sheets.

It is also accompanied by a copy of each prior art document cited in this report.

**1. Basis of the report**

a. With regard to the **language**, the international search was carried out on the basis of the international application in the language in which it was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

the international search was carried out on the basis of a translation of the international application furnished to this Authority (Rule 23.1(b)).

b. With regard to any **nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence** disclosed in the international application, the international search was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing :

contained in the international application in written form.

filed together with the international application in computer readable form.

furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.

furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.

the statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.

the statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished

2.  **Certain claims were found unsearchable** (See Box I).

3.  **Unity of invention is lacking** (see Box II).

4. With regard to the **title**,

the text is approved as submitted by the applicant.

the text has been established by this Authority to read as follows:

5. With regard to the **abstract**,

the text is approved as submitted by the applicant.

the text has been established, according to Rule 38.2(b), by this Authority as it appears in Box III. The applicant may, within one month from the date of mailing of this international search report, submit comments to this Authority.

6. The figure of the **drawings** to be published with the abstract is Figure No.

as suggested by the applicant.

because the applicant failed to suggest a figure.

because this figure better characterizes the invention.

None of the figures.

## PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

## PCT

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT  
(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

Applicant's or agent's file reference 1999CH023	<b>FOR FURTHER ACTION</b>		See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416)
International application No. PCT/IB00/01345	International filing date (day/month/year) 22/09/2000	Priority date (day/month/year) 23/09/1999	
International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC C25D11/24			
<p>Applicant CLARIANT FINANCE (BVI) LIMITED et al.</p> <p>1. This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.</p> <p>2. This REPORT consists of a total of 6 sheets, including this cover sheet.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e. sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT).</p> <p>These annexes consist of a total of 3 sheets.</p>			
<p>3. This report contains indications relating to the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Basis of the report</li> <li>II <input type="checkbox"/> Priority</li> <li>III <input type="checkbox"/> Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability</li> <li>IV <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of unity of invention</li> <li>V <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement</li> <li>VI <input type="checkbox"/> Certain documents cited</li> <li>VII <input type="checkbox"/> Certain defects in the international application</li> <li>VIII <input type="checkbox"/> Certain observations on the international application</li> </ul>			

Date of submission of the demand 03/04/2001	Date of completion of this report 08.11.2001
Name and mailing address of the international preliminary examining authority: European Patent Office D-80298 Munich Tel. +49 89 2399 - 0 Tx: 523656 epmu d Fax: +49 89 2399 - 4465	<p>Authorized officer Hahn, H</p> <p>Telephone No. +49 89 2399 8450</p>  

## PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

## PCT

## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

(PCT Article 18 and Rules 43 and 44)

Applicant's or agent's file reference <b>1999CH023</b>	<b>FOR FURTHER ACTION</b> see Notification of Transmittal of International Search Report (Form PCT/ISA/220) as well as, where applicable, item 5 below.	
International application No. <b>PCT/ IB 00/ 01345</b>	International filing date (day/month/year) <b>22/09/2000</b>	(Earliest) Priority Date (day/month/year) <b>23/09/1999</b>
Applicant <b>CLARIANT FINANCE (BVI) LIMITED et al.</b>		

This International Search Report has been prepared by this International Searching Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 18. A copy is being transmitted to the International Bureau.

This International Search Report consists of a total of 2 sheets.

It is also accompanied by a copy of each prior art document cited in this report.

**1. Basis of the report**

a. With regard to the **language**, the international search was carried out on the basis of the international application in the language in which it was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

the international search was carried out on the basis of a translation of the international application furnished to this Authority (Rule 23.1(b)).

b. With regard to any **nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence** disclosed in the international application, the international search was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing :

contained in the international application in written form.

filed together with the international application in computer readable form.

furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.

furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.

the statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.

the statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished

2.  **Certain claims were found unsearchable** (See Box I).

3.  **Unity of invention is lacking** (see Box II).

**4. With regard to the title,**

the text is approved as submitted by the applicant.

the text has been established by this Authority to read as follows:

**5. With regard to the abstract,**

the text is approved as submitted by the applicant.

the text has been established, according to Rule 38.2(b), by this Authority as it appears in Box III. The applicant may, within one month from the date of mailing of this international search report, submit comments to this Authority.

**6. The figure of the drawings to be published with the abstract is Figure No.**

as suggested by the applicant.

because the applicant failed to suggest a figure.

because this figure better characterizes the invention.

None of the figures.

## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No

IB 00/01345

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER  
IPC 7 C25D11/24

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

## B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 7 C25D

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data

## C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	DE 36 41 766 A (JULIUS & AUGUST ERBSLÖH GMBH) 9 June 1988 (1988-06-09) claims 1-4 ---	1,2,9
X	WO 84 00982 A (FFA FLUG-UND FAHRZEUGWERKE AG) 15 March 1984 (1984-03-15) cited in the application page 10; claim 1 ---	1
A	GB 1 022 751 A (DURAND & HUGUENIN A.G.) page 10; example 26 ---	1,5
A	US 3 917 887 A (F.P. STILLER) 4 November 1975 (1975-11-04) column 7, line 25 - line 41 column 17 -column 19; claim 1 -----	1

Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

Patent family members are listed in annex.

## \* Special categories of cited documents :

- \*A\* document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
- \*E\* earlier document but published on or after the international filing date
- \*L\* document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
- \*O\* document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
- \*P\* document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

- \*T\* later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
- \*X\* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
- \*Y\* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.
- \*&\* document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

Date of mailing of the international search report

12 January 2001

22/01/2001

## Name and mailing address of the ISA

European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2  
NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk  
Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040. Tx. 31 651 epo nl.  
Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016

Authorized officer

Groseiller, P

## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

IB 00/01345

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)		Publication date
DE 3641766	A 09-06-1988	NONE		
WO 8400982	A 15-03-1984	AT 31198 T		15-12-1987
		AU 1886183 A		29-03-1984
		DE 3374791 D		14-01-1988
		EP 0118480 A		19-09-1984
		US 4648911 A		10-03-1987
GB 1022751	A	DE	1228120 B	
US 3917887	A 04-11-1975	NONE		

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY  
EXAMINATION REPORT

International application No. PCT/IB00/01345

I. Basis of the report

1. With regard to the elements of the international application (*Replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to this report since they do not contain amendments (Rules 70.16 and 70.17)*):

Description, pages:

2-12 as originally filed

1 as received on 26/10/2001 with letter of 25/10/2001

Claims, No.:

1-9 as received on 26/10/2001 with letter of 25/10/2001

2. With regard to the language, all the elements marked above were available or furnished to this Authority in the language in which the international application was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

These elements were available or furnished to this Authority in the following language: , which is:

- the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of the international search (under Rule 23.1(b)).
- the language of publication of the international application (under Rule 48.3(b)).
- the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international preliminary examination (under Rule 55.2 and/or 55.3).

3. With regard to any nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence disclosed in the international application, the international preliminary examination was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing:

- contained in the international application in written form.
- filed together with the international application in computer readable form.
- furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.
- furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.
- The statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.
- The statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished.

4. The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:

- the description, pages:
- the claims, Nos.: 10-11
- the drawings, sheets:

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY  
EXAMINATION REPORT**

International application No. PCT/IB00/01345

5.  This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed (Rule 70.2(c)).  
*(Any replacement sheet containing such amendments must be referred to under item 1 and annexed to this report.)*

6. Additional observations, if necessary:

**V. Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement**

1. Statement

Novelty (N)	Yes:	Claims 1-9
	No:	Claims
Inventive step (IS)	Yes:	Claims 1-9
	No:	Claims
Industrial applicability (IA)	Yes:	Claims 1-9
	No:	Claims

2. Citations and explanations  
see separate sheet

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY  
EXAMINATION REPORT - SEPARATE SHEET**

International application No. PCT/IB00/01345

**1. Section V:**

The documents of the International Search Report are regarded to be relevant as follows:

D1 = DE 36 41 766 A (JULIUS & AUGUST ERBSLÖH GMBH) 9 June 1988 (1988-06-09)

D2 = WO 84 00982 A (FFA FLUG-UND FAHRZEUGWERKE AG) 15 March 1984 (1984-03-15) cited in the application

D3 = GB 1 022 751 A (DURAND & HUGUENIN A.G.)

D4 = US 3 917 887 A (F.P.STILLER) 4 November 1975 (1975-11-04)

1.1 The claims 7-9 of this application are interpreted as composition and product claims 'per se'. Therefore any document which discloses such a claimed composition or product - even if obtained by a different process or if used for a different purpose - takes away the novelty of the claimed subject-matter.

1.2 Document D1, which is already identified in the present application, discloses a process for producing light fastness and weather resistance improved anodized and dyed layers on aluminium and aluminium alloy substrates wherein the anodized substrate is coloured in two steps including an organic dye component and thereafter treated in an aqueous solution comprising nickel and fluoride ions, eventually a second sealing step with boiling water is carried out (cf. claims 1-4; example). Although document D1 does not specify the type of the organic dyeing component used it is evident that it must have been an anionic type (only the anionic dyes are water soluble). Furthermore, due to the obtained light fastness of greater than 2000 hours as measured with the Weather-o-meter apparatus no change of the colour was measured.

As convincingly argued by the applicant anionic dyes are not the only water soluble dyes (compare e.g. the Colour Index). Further the method described in D1 (cf. col. 2, lines 25-29) does not mention a dye but just a dye component (the dyeing is carried out electrolytically); there is also no mention of a dye bath. A dyebath is generically mentioned at col. 2, lines 47 and 50, but there is no mention of any particular dye and it is also not mentioned whether the dye bath is aqueous. Furthermore, it is not conclusively derivable that in D1 there would have been employed a dye containing a

sulpho group; especially in view of D3, showing dyes with other acid groups than sulpho groups (cf. e.g. example 5). Finally the applicant argued that sulpho groups are normally not considered to represent a ligand capable of forming a metal complex, i.e. a co-ordination complex bond having a homopolar character, because sulpho groups form typically ionic, i.e. heteropolar bonds with metal ions. These arguments were eventually accepted.

Consequently, the process according to D1 is considered neither to disclose the subject-matter of claims 1 and 7 nor to fairly suggest the same.

1.3 Document D2 discloses a process for the cold sealing of dyed anodized aluminium substrates using an aqueous solution containing nickel fluoride and optionally a surfactant (cf. page 8, lines 8-23; claims 1-9). According to example 1 the cold sealing aqueous solution was made from 262.9 g nickel sulfate six hydrate and 42.0 g sodium fluoride, surfactant "Ekalin F" and "Preventol" and the pH was adjusted to 5.6 using acetic acid; the said solution was applied to an anodized aluminium profile which additionally had partially been coloured using "Colinal" 3175 (i.e. an electrolytic colouring process using a metal salt solution instead of an adsorption colouring process). Hence the process according to D2 is neither relevant for the claimed process nor for the resulting dyed oxide layers.

1.4 Document D3 discloses a process for dyeing aluminium oxide layers (including alloys of aluminium) using specific anionic dyes comprising at least one acid group of an acid of pentavalent phosphorus, arsenic or antimony (cf. claims 1-8; examples); which process uses boiling water in a sealing step for the dyed anodized aluminium. No cold sealing agent comprising nickel fluoride in D3 disclosed or suggested. Hence D3 is considered not to be particularly relevant.

1.5 Document D4 discloses a process for dyeing aluminium oxide layers produced by anodization of aluminium or aluminium alloys using specific anionic dyes which dyed anodized layers are thereafter sealed with boiling water or steam or by using nickel or cobalt acetate (or sulfate or nitrate) (cf. col. 5, lines 41-46; col. 7, lines 25-44; examples; claims 1-35). No cold sealing agent comprising nickel fluoride in D4 disclosed or suggested. Hence D4 is considered not to be particularly relevant.

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY  
EXAMINATION REPORT - SEPARATE SHEET**

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International application No. PCT/IB00/01345

1.6 As a consequence of the paragraphs 1.1 to 1.5 above the claims 1-9 meet the requirements of Article 33(2) and (3) PCT. The industrial applicability of the claimed process for the production of dyed oxide layers on aluminium as well as of the claimed products is self-evident.

CLAIMS

1. Process for the production of dyed oxide layers on aluminium or aluminium alloys by dyeing in an aqueous dyebath, rinsing with water and sealing, characterized in that the dyeing is carried out using at least one water-soluble anionic dye (A) which possesses at least one substituent and/or component combination with a ligand character that is capable of forming a nickel complex with nickel ions, and the sealing is carried out by cold sealing with at least one sealing agent (B) containing nickel ions  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$  and fluoride ions  $\text{F}^-$ .
2. Process according to Claim 1, characterized in that, for the sealing, a two-step sealing is carried out, in which, in the first step, cold sealing is carried out with at least one sealing agent (B), and in the second step, hot secondary sealing is carried out with water.
3. Process according to Claim 1 or 2, characterized in that the dyes (A) are dyes with which dyeings are produced on the oxide layers whose light fastness, determined in accordance with ISO specification No. 105 B02 (USA), after hot-sealing with water or with a nickel compound, corresponds to a light fastness grade of below 7.
4. Process according to one of Claims 1 to 4, characterized in that the dyes (A) are sulfo group-containing dyes which contain at least one substituent and/or component combination with a ligand character capable of forming a labile nickel complex with nickel ions,
5. Process according to one of Claims 1 to 4, characterized in that the dyes (A) are sulfo group-containing dyes which contain at least one salicylic acid group, optionally in salt form, or are copper complexes which contain nitrogen atoms as ring members of a heterocyclic ring, only some or none of which participate in the copper complex formation.
6. Process according to one of Claims 1 to 5, characterized in that (B) is employed in the form of (B)-containing sealing agent preparation ( $\text{B}_P$ ).
7. Light fastness improvement agent for dyeings produced with anionic dyes of oxide layers on aluminium or aluminium alloys which is a cold sealing agent (B) as defined in Claim 1, or a preparation ( $\text{B}_P$ ) thereof as defined in Claim 6.

8. Light fastness improvement agent according to Claim 7 for dyeings produced with anionic dyes (A) as defined in Claim 1 or 3-5.
9. The oxide layers dyed by the process according to one of Claims 1 to 6.
10. Dyed oxide layers according to Claim 9 with a light fastness corresponding to a light fastness grade, in accordance with ISO specification No. 105 B02 (USA), of  $\geq 7$ , preferably  $\geq 8$ .
11. Dyed oxide layers according to Claim 9 or 10 with a light fastness corresponding to a light fastness grade, in accordance with ISO specification No. 105 B02 (USA), which is at least two grades higher than an otherwise identical dyeing which, however, has been hot-sealed with water.

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization  
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date  
29 March 2001 (29.03.2001)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number  
**WO 01/21860 A1**

(51) International Patent Classification<sup>7</sup>: **C25D 11/24**

Georg [AT/CH]; Hagenthalerstrasse 7, CH-4055 Basel (CH). TSCHEULIN, Günther [DE/CH]; Hauptstrasse 26, CH-5262 Frick (CH).

(21) International Application Number: **PCT/IB00/01345**

(74) Agents: D'HAEMER, Jan et al.; Clariant International Ltd., Rothausstrasse 61, CH-4132 Muttenz (CH).

(22) International Filing Date:  
22 September 2000 (22.09.2000)

(81) Designated States (national): BR, CA, CN, US.

(25) Filing Language: English

(84) Designated States (regional): European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE).

(26) Publication Language: English

Published:

(30) Priority Data:  
99810855.9 23 September 1999 (23.09.1999) EP

- *With international search report.*
- *Before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of amendments.*

(71) Applicant (for BR, CA, CN only): **CLARIANT FINNANCE (BVI) LIMITED** [—/—]; Citco Building, Wickhams Cay, P.O. Box 662, Road Town, Tortola (VG).

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

(71) Applicant (for all designated States except BR, CA, CN, US): **CLARIANT INTERNATIONAL LTD. [CH/CH]**; Rothausstrasse 61, CH-4132 Muttenz (CH).

(72) Inventors; and

(75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): **SCHÖFBERGER,**



**WO 01/21860 A1**

(54) Title: **LIGHTFASTNESS-IMPROVEMENT OF DYEINGS ON ALUMINIUM OXIDE LAYERS**

(57) Abstract: Process for the production of dyed oxide layers on aluminium or aluminium alloys by dyeing in an aqueous dyebath, rinsing with water and sealing, in which the dyeing is carried out using at least one water-soluble anionic dye (A) which possesses at least one substituent and/or component combination with a ligand character that is capable of forming a nickel complex with nickel ions, and the sealing is carried out by cold sealing with at least one sealing agent preparation (B) containing nickel ions  $Ni^{2+}$  and fluoride ions  $F^-$  and optionally hot secondary sealing with water, especially for achieving dyeings of improved light fastness.

### LIGHTFASTNESS-IMPROVEMENT OF DYEINGS ON ALUMINIUM OXIDE LAYERS

Structures, articles or parts made of aluminium or aluminium alloys which are provided with a protective oxide layer, in particular an oxide layer produced electrochemically by anodization, are nowadays increasingly being used in engineering and construction, for example as a component and/or for the decoration of buildings or means of transport or for utility or artistic articles. For the aesthetic design of such structures, articles or parts, they, or their oxide layers, are frequently coloured. It is therefore desirable for the coloured layers to retain their coloured design for as long as possible and consequently to have very high levels of fastness to environmentally caused influences, especially to the action of sunlight.

Usually this problem is approached by employing dyestuffs of selected structures, which provide dyeings of very high light fastnesses on anodized aluminium, such as described e.g. in EP-A-986615 or 988343.

The surface of the anodized aluminium may be sealed in various ways, e.g. with boiling water or also with particular sealants or sealing salts. In WO-A-84 00982 there is described a process for sealing the anodized, uncoloured or coloured surface in a still wet state at a temperature < 30°C with a solution containing a nickel salt and a fluoride in order to improve the touch-resistance and corrosion-resistance of the surface.

In DE-A-3641766 there is described a two-stage process for the sealing of anodized and dyed aluminium by treatment first with an aqueous  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$  and  $\text{F}^-$  ions containing solution and then with hot water or steam in order to improve the weather and light fastnesses of dyeings, the mentioned dyeing being a dyeing with a dyeing electrolyte that contains a metal salt and an organic dye component.

For the colouring of oxide layers on aluminium or aluminium alloys, dyes of various shades are known, and the oxide layers dyed therewith can be sealed in a manner which is conventional per se, for example with hot water. However, the dyeings obtainable in each case can have greatly different light fastnesses, especially after extended exposure to the sun, so that – particularly in the case of multicoloured articles – the dyeing which is the least light-fast impairs the overall impression of the coloured article. It is thus desired to achieve dyeings with better light fastness properties and also to bring the light fastness of

different dyeings to a level which is higher overall, i.e., for example, to bring dyeings with dyes which produce light fastnesses which are weaker per se to the light fastness level of dyeings obtainable with dyes which produce light fastnesses which are very high per se. By sealing with certain sealing agents, for example based on nickel at the boiling temperature, a certain improvement in the light fastness can be achieved in some cases, but this is still insufficient in many cases, particularly for articles intended for external architecture, i.e. which are exposed to sunlight for a very long time.

It has now been found that the light fastness of adsorptive dyeings obtainable on aluminium oxide layers with certain dyestuffs (A) which, due to their too low light fastness, are usually considered as being unsuitable or not well suitable for the dyeing of aluminium oxide layers for the production of dyed external construction elements which will be subject to very long sunlight exposure, can be improved to a surprisingly high level by a cold sealing with a sealant (B) containing  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$  and  $\text{F}^-$  ions, as described in more detail below.

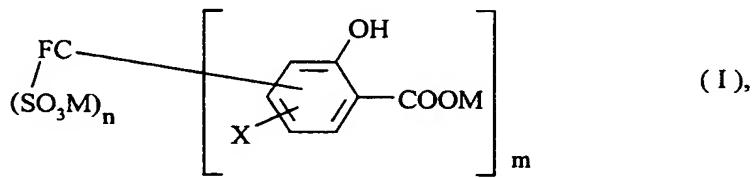
The invention relates to the process for the production of the dyed oxide layers, to the corresponding light fastness improvement agents, and to the substrates dyed in this way.

A first subject-matter of the invention is thus a process for the production of dyed oxide layers on aluminium or aluminium alloys by dyeing in an aqueous dyebath, rinsing with water and sealing, which is characterized in that the dyeing is carried out using at least one water-soluble anionic dye (A) which possesses at least one substituent and/or component combination with a ligand character that is capable per se of forming a nickel complex with nickel ions, and the sealing is carried out by cold sealing with at least one sealing agent (B) containing nickel ions  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$  and fluoride ions  $\text{F}^-$ .

The dyes (A) which can be employed in accordance with the invention generally belong to the series of those which are known for the dyeing of aluminium oxide layers or can be used for this purpose. They are anionic and preferably possess at least one sulpho group in the molecule. They are capable of forming complexes with nickel(II) ions, in particular labile nickel complexes. Correspondingly, the dyes (A) advantageously contain suitable available electron pairs in suitable orbital configurations and/or heteroatoms, in particular as occur in substituent and/or component combinations with a ligand character. In other words, substituent and/or component combinations with a ligand character which are capable of forming labile Ni complexes with nickel ions are present in (A). Such configurations are produced, for example, through combination of corresponding metallizable substituents which are able to bind the nickel ion in a labile manner, such as, for example, a hydroxyl group and a carboxyl group vicinal thereto, as are present in salicylic acid, or, in 1:1 metal complexes, especially copper complexes,

heteroatomic moieties, in particular nitrogen atoms as ring members of a heterocyclic ring, only some or none of which participate in the copper complex formation, as present, for example, in copper phthalocyanine complexes (particularly copper complexes), and/or in copper complexes of monoazo dyes which contain a coupling component from the oxyquinoline or pyrazolone series as azo component. The salicylic acid groups are in particular those which are bonded to the remaining part of the dye molecule in the meta-position and/or para-position to the carboxyl group, preferably via at least one heteroatomic bridging unit. The following may be mentioned as examples of suitable dyes (A): sulphyo group-containing phthalocyanine-copper complexes, salicylic acid group-containing, sulphyo group-containing mono- and disazo dyes, salicylic acid group-containing, sulphyo group-containing metal complexes of monoazo dyes complexed to the azo group (for example 1:1 Cu, 1:1 or 1:2 Cr, 1:2 Co complexes), and sulphyo group-containing 1:1 metal complexes, particularly copper complexes, of monoazo dyes containing a coupling component from the oxyquinoline or pyrazolone series as azo component.

Representative examples are the dyes of the general formulae



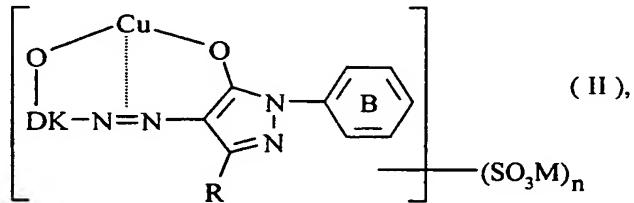
in which X denotes hydrogen or a bond to FC,

m denotes 1 or 2,

n denotes a number from 1 to twice the total number of aromatic rings in the molecule,

M denotes hydrogen or a non-chromophoric cation

and FC denotes the (m+n)-valent residual chromophoric part of the dye,



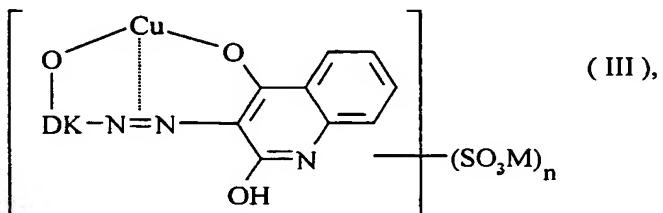
in which R denotes C<sub>1-4</sub>-alkyl,

M denotes hydrogen or a non-chromophoric cation,

n denotes a number from 1 to twice the total number of aromatic rings in the molecule,

and DK denotes the radical of a diazo component,

and the ring B may optionally be further substituted, for example with C<sub>1-4</sub>-alkyl, and



in which M denotes hydrogen or a non-chromophoric cation,

n denotes a number from 1 to twice the total number of aromatic rings in the molecule and DK denotes the radical of a diazo component.

Other sulpho group-containing dyes (A) from the 1:1 copper complex series may also be employed in the process according to the invention. By contrast, less suitable or unsuitable dyes are those which contain conjugated carbonyl groups and contain no salicylic acid groups (for example anthraquinone dyes), or 1:2 metal complexes which contain no salicylic acid groups. Suitable as (A) are particularly those dyes which, dyed on anodized aluminium and sealed with boiling water, give dyeings which have a light fastness of < 7, determined in accordance with ISO specification No. 105 B02 (USA) (by dry exposure with a standard illuminant in an Atlas Ci 35 A Weather-O-meter), particularly those whose dyeings, sealed with boiling water, have a light fastness, determined in this way, of ≤ 6. Dyes which come into consideration in particular are those whose dyeings on anodized aluminium, sealed hot, in particular at temperatures of > 80°C, with a nickel compound, have a light fastness, in accordance with ISO specification No. 105 B02 (USA), of ≤ 7 or even ≤ 8.

The anionic dyes (A) can be in the form of the free acids or preferably in the form of water-soluble salts, for example as alkali metal, alkaline earth metal and/or ammonium salts, particularly as described below for M.

M can stand for hydrogen or a non-chromophoric cation. If a plurality of anionic groups are present in the molecule, the respective M can have identical or different meanings. Hydrogen as ion is in the form of the hydronium ion. As non-chromophoric cations, alkali metal cations, ammonium cations and alkaline earth metal cations, for example, come into consideration. As alkaline earth metal cations, calcium and magnesium, for example, may be mentioned. As ammonium cations, unsubstituted ammonium or alternatively ammonium ions of low-molecular-weight amines may be mentioned, principally mono-, di- or tri-C<sub>1-2</sub>-alkyl- and/or -β-hydroxy-C<sub>2-3</sub>-alkyl-ammonium, for example mono-, di-

or tri-isopropanolammonium, mono-, di- or tri-ethanolammonium, N-methyl-N-ethanolammonium. As alkali metal cations, conventional cations of this type come into consideration, for example lithium, sodium and/or potassium ions. Of the said cations, the alkali metal cations and ammonium cations are preferred. According to one embodiment of the invention, some of the symbols M stand for hydrogen and the remainder thereof stand for alkali metal and/or ammonium cations.

The oxide layers to be dyed are, in particular, synthetically produced oxide layers on aluminium or aluminium alloys.

Aluminium alloys which principally come into consideration are those in which the aluminium content preponderates, especially alloys with magnesium, silicon, zinc and/or copper, for example Al/Mg, Al/Si, Al/Mg/Si, Al/Zn/Mg, Al/Cu/Mg and Al/Zn/Mg/Cu, preferably those in which the aluminium content makes up at least 90 per cent by weight; the magnesium content is preferably  $\leq$  6 per cent by weight; the silicon content is preferably  $\leq$  6 per cent by weight; the zinc content is preferably  $\leq$  10 per cent by weight; the copper content is advantageously  $\leq$  2 per cent by weight, preferably  $\leq$  0.2 per cent by weight.

The oxide layers formed on the metallic aluminium or on the aluminium alloys may have been generated by chemical oxidation or preferably by galvanic means by anodic oxidation. The anodic oxidation of the aluminium or of the aluminium alloy for passivation and formation of a porous layer can take place by known methods, using direct current and/or alternating current, and using electrolyte baths which are suitable in each case, for example with addition of sulfuric acid, oxalic acid, chromic acid, citric acid or combinations of oxalic acid and chromic acid or sulfuric acid and oxalic acid. Such anodization methods are known in industry, for example the DS method (direct current; sulfuric acid), the DSX method (direct current; sulfuric acid with addition of oxalic acid), the DX method (direct current; oxalic acid), the DX method with addition of chromic acid, the AX method (alternating current; oxalic acid), the AX-DX method (oxalic acid; first alternating current then direct current), the AS method (alternating current; sulfuric acid) and the chromic acid method (direct current; chromic acid). The current voltages are, for example, in the range from 5 to 80 volts, preferably from 8 to 50 volts; the temperatures are, for example, in the range from 5 to 50°C; the current density at the anode is, for example, in the range from 0.3 to 5 A/dm<sup>2</sup>, preferably from 0.5 to 4 A/dm<sup>2</sup>, where current densities as low as  $\leq$  2 A/dm<sup>2</sup> are generally suitable for generating a porous oxide layer; at higher voltages and current densities, for example in the range from 100 to 150 volts and  $\geq$  2 A/dm<sup>2</sup>, particularly from 2 to 3 A/dm<sup>2</sup>, and at temperatures up to 80°C, particularly hard and fine-pored oxide layers can be generated, for example by the "Ematal" method with oxalic acid in the presence of titanium salts and zirconium salts. In the production of oxide layers which are subsequently dyed electrolytically or directly by adsorptive

methods with a dye of the formula (I), the voltage is, according to a preferred procedure which is conventional per se in practice, in the range from 12 to 20 volts; the current density here is preferably from 1 to 2 A/dm<sup>2</sup>. These anodization methods are known in general terms in industry and are also described in detail in the specialist literature, for example in Ullmann's "Enzyklopädie der Technischen Chemie" [Encyclopedia of Industrial Chemistry], 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, Volume 12, pages 196 to 198, or in the Sandoz brochures "Sanodal®" (Sandoz AG, Basle, Switzerland, Publication No. 9083.00.89) or "Ratgeber für das Adsorptive Färben von Anodisiertem Aluminium" [Advice for the Adsorptive Dyeing of Anodized Aluminium] (Sandoz, Publication No. 9122.00.80). The layer thickness of the porous oxide layer is advantageously in the range from 5 to 35 µm, preferably from 20 to 30 µm, particularly from 20 to 25 µm. In the case of colour anodization, the thickness of the oxide layer is, for example, values in the range from 5 to 60 µm, preferably from 10 to 40 µm. If the anodized aluminium or the anodized aluminium alloy has been stored for a short time (for example 1 week or less) before the dyeing, it is advantageous to wet and/or to activate the substrate before the dyeing, for example by treatment with a non-reducing, aqueous mineral acid, for example with sulfuric acid or nitric acid. If desired, the oxide layer – analogously to the known "Sandalor®" method can first be pre-dyed electrolytically, for example in a bronze shade, and subsequently over-dyed with a dye of the formula (A); in this way, particularly opaque shades are obtainable which are particularly suitable for use, for example, in external architecture. It is also possible for oxide layers pre-dyed by colour anodization (by the method known as integral dyeing) to be over-dyed with a dye (A); in this way, opaque shades which are particularly suitable, for example, for external architecture are likewise obtainable.

For the dyeing of the oxide layer with the anionic dyes (A), use can be made of dyeing methods which are conventional per se, in particular adsorption methods (essentially without voltage), where the dye solution can be applied, for example, to the oxide surface, for example by spraying-on or by application with a roll (depending on the shape of the substrate), or preferably by immersing the object to be dyed into a dye bath. In accordance with one embodiment of the dyeing process according to the invention, the anodized metal objects can be treated with the dye bath after the anodic treatment and the rinsing in the same vessel in which the anodization has taken place, or, in accordance with a further embodiment, the objects to be dyed can be removed from the vessel after the anodic treatment and the rinsing and dyed in a second unit either directly or after drying and possibly intermediate storage, where, if the objects have been stored in the intermediate, it is advisable to carry out an activation (for example by brief treatment with sulfuric acid or nitric acid) before the dyeing. It is noted in this respect that an intermediate storage – if it takes place at all – preferably takes place for a restricted, short time, for example less than 1 week, particularly ≤ 2 days. In accordance with preferred, generally conventional processes, dyeing is carried out immediately after anodization and subsequent rinsing.

The dyeing expediently takes place at temperatures below the boiling point of the liquor, advantageously at temperatures in the range from 15 to 80°C, preferably in the range from 15 to 70°C, particularly preferably from 20 to 60°C. The pH of the dyeing liquor is, for example, in the clearly acidic to weakly basic range, for example in the pH range from 3 to 8, where weakly acidic to nearly neutral conditions are preferred, in particular in the pH range from 4 to 6. The dye concentration and the dyeing duration can vary very greatly depending on the substrate and the desired dyeing effect. For example, suitable dye concentrations are in the range from 0.01 to 20 g/l, advantageously from 0.1 to 10 g/l, in particular from 0.2 to 2 g/l. The dyeing duration can be in the range from 30 seconds to 1 hour, advantageously from 1 to 60 minutes, preferably from 5 to 40 minutes.

The dyeings obtained in this way can now be sealed. Prior to sealing, the dyeings are rinsed with water.

The sealing agents (B) to be employed in accordance with the invention advantageously contain the nickel ions and the fluoride ions in the form of nickel fluoride. If desired, the nickel fluoride can be produced by reaction of nickel acetate and an alkali metal fluoride (advantageously sodium fluoride), or (B) can consist of nickel fluoride or a mixture of nickel acetate and sodium fluoride or, in accordance with a preferred variant, (B) consists of nickel fluoride mixed with nickel acetate and sodium fluoride, where nickel fluoride advantageously makes up at least 50 % by weight of the mixture, preferably at least 70 % by weight, for example from 70 to 95 % by weight, particularly preferably at least 80 % by weight; in the mixture of the  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$  and  $\text{Na}^+$  ions, the proportion of  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$  ions is advantageously at least 50 mol-%, preferably at least 70 mol-%, the proportion of  $\text{Na}^+$  ions being for example from 3 to 15 mol-%; in the mixture of the acetate ions and fluoride ions, the proportion of fluoride ions is advantageously at least 50 mol-%, preferably at least 70 mol-%, the proportion of acetate ions being for example from 3 to 15 mol-%. If desired, and depending on the substrate and/or dyeing, sealing auxiliaries for example cobalt compounds, may be present in (B) in small proportions, for example up to 10 % by weight of (B), for example from 0.1 to 5 % by weight of (B). The sealing agents (B) are advantageously employed in the form of (B)-containing preparations ( $\text{B}_P$ ), which may be, for example, aqueous solutions of (B) or mixtures of (B) with further auxiliaries, in particular with anionic surfactants (T), or also aqueous solutions of such mixtures. Suitable anionic surfactants (T) are known substances, in particular sulpho group-containing surfactants, preferably products of the condensation of sulpho group-containing aromatics with formaldehyde, for example products of the condensation of sulphonated naphthalene or/and sulphonated phenols (which may optionally be further substituted, for example by methyl) with formaldehyde to give oligomeric condensation products with a surfactant character. The weight ratio of (T) to (B) is advantageously in the range from 0.1 to 20 % by weight,

preferably from 0.2 to 15 % by weight. If aqueous solutions of (B) or of mixtures of (B) and (T) are employed as (B<sub>P</sub>), the (B) content is advantageously in the range from 2 to 40 % by weight, preferably from 4 to 25 % by weight, of the aqueous concentration preparation. If (B) or (B<sub>P</sub>) is used as a dry product (for example with a water content of  $\leq$  10 % by weight), it is advantageous, for simpler metering and addition or metered addition, to formulate this with water to give an aqueous concentrated preparation of the concentrations indicated above.

The cold sealing with (B) or (B<sub>P</sub>) can be carried out, for example, at temperatures below 40°C, for example in the range from 18 to 35°C, preferably from 20 to 30°C. The Ni<sup>2+</sup> concentration in the sealing bath is advantageously in the range from 0.05 to 10 g/l, preferably in the range from 0.1 to 5 g/l, with concentrations below 2 g/l, in particular in the range of 0.4 to 1.9 g/l, there being already obtainable outstanding results. The F<sup>-</sup> concentration by weight in the sealing bath is preferably inferior to the Ni<sup>2+</sup> concentration, e.g. as corresponds to the ratio in the nickel fluoride  $\pm$  20 %, or even  $\pm$  10 %. The F<sup>-</sup> concentration in the sealing bath is advantageously in the range from 0.03 to 7 g/l, preferably in the range from 0.06 to 3.5 g/l, with F<sup>-</sup> concentrations below 1.5 g/l, e.g. in the range of 0.2 to 1.3 g/l, or even below 1 g/l there being already obtainable outstanding results. The pH of the sealing bath is, for example, in the acidic to weakly basic range, advantageously in the pH range from 4.5 to 8. The duration of the sealing can advantageously depend on the layer thickness and is, for example, from 0.4 to 2 minutes, preferably from 0.6 to 1.2 minutes, per  $\mu\text{m}$  thickness of the oxide layer of the substrate, sealing advantageously being carried out for from 5 to 60 minutes, preferably for from 10 to 30 minutes. For the preferred oxide layers with a thickness of at least 20  $\mu\text{m}$ , preferably from 20 to 30  $\mu\text{m}$ , mostly from 20 to 25  $\mu\text{m}$ , which are particularly suitable for external architectural components, sealing durations of from 10 to 30 minutes, for example 20 minutes, are, for example, already suitable.

The cold sealing with (B) is advantageously followed by hot sealing with water. This means that it is advantageous to carry out a two-step sealing, in which cold sealing is carried out in the first step with at least one sealing agent (B) as described, and in the second step hot sealing is carried out with water. The second step of the two-step sealing, i.e. the hot treatment with water, is advantageously carried out in the temperature range from 80°C to the boiling point, preferably from 90 to 100°C, or alternatively with steam at temperatures of from 95 to 150°C, optionally under pressure, for example at an excess pressure in the range from 1 to 4 bar. The duration of the secondary sealing with water is, for example, in the range from 15 to 60 minutes.

Surprisingly, the process according to the invention enables high light fastnesses of the dyeings to be achieved, and it is in particular possible, even for external architectural purposes, to employ dyes which

would otherwise not be suitable for this purpose owing to their inadequate light fastness. Thus, the process according to the invention is, in particular, one in which dyes can be employed with which dyeings are obtainable whose light fastnesses, if they are hot sealed only with water, are lower than those of the dyeings sealed in accordance with the invention, it also being possible to employ particularly dyes whose dyeings, if hot sealed only with water, are 2 or even more light fastness grades lower.

The light fastness can be determined in accordance with ISO specifications, for example in accordance with ISO specification No. 2135-1984 by dry exposure of a sample in exposure cycles of 200 hours each with a standard illuminant in an Atlas 65 WRC Weather-O-meter fitted with a xenon arc lamp, or in accordance with ISO specification No. 105 B02 (USA) by dry exposure of a sample in exposure cycles of 100 hours each with a standard illuminant in an Atlas Ci 35 A Weather-O-meter fitted with a xenon arc lamp, and comparing the exposed samples with a grade pattern, for example with the light fastness grade = 6 on the blue scale (corresponding approximately to grade 3 on the grey scale), or directly with the blue scale master with grade 6. If the light fastness value corresponding to grade 6 in accordance with the blue scale is only achieved after two exposure cycles, the pattern is assessed as having a light fastness grade = 7; if this point is only achieved after 4 cycles, the pattern is ascribed a fastness grade of 8, and so on, as shown in the Table below.

Table

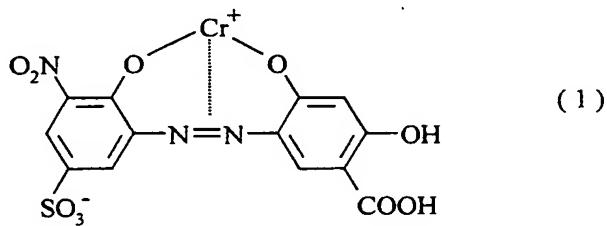
Exposure cycle	Exposure time		Light fastness grade
	65 WRC	Ci 35 A	
1	200 hours	100 hours	6
2	400 hours	200 hours	7
4	800 hours	400 hours	8
8	1600 hours	800 hours	9
16	3200 hours	1600 hours	10

Conversely, the sample can be compared with the blue scale after a certain exposure time and assessed correspondingly.

In the following examples, parts denote parts by weight and percentages per cent by weight. The temperatures are given in degrees Celsius; the dyes are employed in commercially available form.

Example 1

A degreased and deoxidized sheet of pure aluminium is anodically oxidized for 40-50 minutes at a voltage of from 15 to 16 volts with direct current with a density of 1.5 A/dm<sup>2</sup> in an aqueous solution containing 18-22 parts of sulphuric acid and 1.2-7.5 parts of aluminium sulphate in 100 parts, at a temperature of from 18 to 20°C. An oxide layer with a thickness of about 20-24 µm is formed. After rinsing with water, the anodized aluminium sheet is dyed for 40 minutes at 60°C in a solution consisting of 0.5 part of the dye of the formula



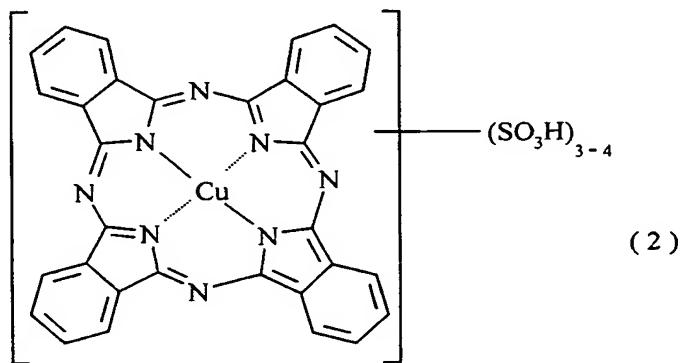
as the sodium salt, in 1000 parts of deionized water, whose pH has been adjusted to 5.5 with acetic acid and sodium acetate. The dyed sheet is rinsed with water and then divided into two halves.

The first half is sealed in deionized water at from 98 to 100°C for 40-50 minutes. The light fastness on the blue scale, determined in accordance with ISO specification No. 105 B02 (USA) (after dry exposure with a standard illuminant in an Atlas Ci 35 A Weather-O-meter), is 3 (after 100 hours).

The other half is sealed in a 2 g/l NiF<sub>2</sub> solution in deionized water at from 28 to 30°C for 20 minutes and subsequently post-sealed in boiling deionized water for 30 minutes. The light fastness on the blue scale, determined in accordance with ISO specification No. 105 B02 (USA) (after dry exposure with a standard illuminant in an Atlas Ci 35 A Weather-O-meter), is 7 (first brake after 200 hours).

Example 2

The procedure is as in Example 1, with the difference that instead of the dye of the formula (1), 1 part of the dye of the formula



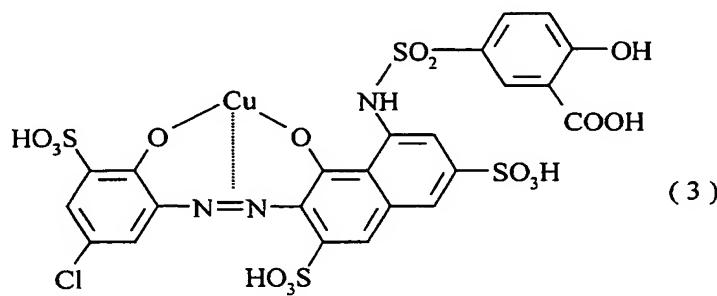
as the sodium salt, is used. The dyed sheet is rinsed with water and then divided into two halves.

The first half is sealed in deionized water at from 98 to 100°C for 40-50 minutes. The light fastness on the blue scale, determined in accordance with ISO specification No. 105 B02 (USA) (after dry exposure with a standard illuminant in an Atlas Ci 35 A Weather-O-meter), is 5-6 (after 100 hours).

The other half is sealed in a 2 g/l  $\text{NiF}_2$  solution in deionized water at from 28 to 30°C for 20 minutes and subsequently post-sealed in boiling deionized water for 30 minutes. The light fastness on the blue scale, determined in accordance with ISO specification No. 105 B02 (USA) (after dry exposure with a standard illuminant in an Atlas Ci 35 A Weather-O-meter), is 7 (first brake after 200 hours).

Example 3

The procedure is as in Example 1, with the difference that instead of the dye of the formula (1), 0.3 part of the dye of the formula



as the sodium salt, is employed. The dyed sheet is rinsed with water and then divided into two halves.

The first half is sealed in deionized water at from 98 to 100°C for 40-50 minutes. The light fastness on the blue scale, determined in accordance with ISO specification No. 105 B02 (USA) (after dry exposure with a standard illuminant in an Atlas Ci 35 A Weather-O-meter), is 4-5 (after 100 hours).

The other half is sealed in a 2 g/l  $\text{NiF}_2$  solution in deionized water at from 28 to 30°C for 20 minutes and subsequently post-sealed in boiling deionized water for 30 minutes. The light fastness on the blue scale, determined in accordance with ISO specification No. 105 B02 (USA) (after dry exposure with a standard illuminant in an Atlas Ci 35 A Weather-O-meter), is 9 (first break after 800 hours).

CLAIMS

1. Process for the production of dyed oxide layers on aluminium or aluminium alloys by dyeing in an aqueous dyebath, rinsing with water and sealing, characterized in that the dyeing is carried out using at least one water-soluble anionic dye (A) which possesses at least one substituent and/or component combination with a ligand character that is capable of forming a nickel complex with nickel ions, and the sealing is carried out by cold sealing with at least one sealing agent (B) containing nickel ions  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$  and fluoride ions  $\text{F}^-$ .
2. Process according to Claim 1, characterized in that, for the sealing, a two-step sealing is carried out, in which, in the first step, cold sealing is carried out with at least one sealing agent (B), and in the second step, hot secondary sealing is carried out with water.
3. Process according to Claim 1 or 2, characterized in that the dyes (A) are dyes with which dyeings are produced on the oxide layers whose light fastness, determined in accordance with ISO specification No. 105 B02 (USA), after hot-sealing with water or with a nickel compound, corresponds to a light fastness grade of below 7.
4. Process according to one of Claims 1 to 4, characterized in that the dyes (A) are sulfo group-containing dyes which contain at least one substituent and/or component combination with a ligand character capable of forming a labile nickel complex with nickel ions,
5. Process according to one of Claims 1 to 4, characterized in that the dyes (A) are sulfo group-containing dyes which contain at least one salicylic acid group, optionally in salt form, or are copper complexes which contain nitrogen atoms as ring members of a heterocyclic ring, only some or none of which participate in the copper complex formation.
6. Process according to one of Claims 1 to 5, characterized in that (B) is employed in the form of (B)-containing sealing agent preparation (B<sub>P</sub>).
7. Light fastness improvement agent for dyeings produced with anionic dyes of oxide layers on aluminium or aluminium alloys which is a cold sealing agent (B) as defined in Claim 1, or a preparation (B<sub>P</sub>) thereof as defined in Claim 6.

8. Light fastness improvement agent according to Claim 7 for dyeings produced with anionic dyes (A) as defined in Claim 1 or 3-5.
9. The oxide layers dyed by the process according to one of Claims 1 to 6.
10. Dyed oxide layers according to Claim 9 with a light fastness corresponding to a light fastness grade, in accordance with ISO specification No. 105 B02 (USA), of  $\geq 7$ , preferably  $\geq 8$ .
11. Dyed oxide layers according to Claim 9 or 10 with a light fastness corresponding to a light fastness grade, in accordance with ISO specification No. 105 B02 (USA), which is at least two grades higher than an otherwise identical dyeing which, however, has been hot-sealed with water.

# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Internal Application No

PCT/IB 00/01345

## A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC 7 C25D11/24

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

## B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 7 C25D

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data

## C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	DE 36 41 766 A (JULIUS & AUGUST ERBSLÖH GMBH) 9 June 1988 (1988-06-09) claims 1-4 ---	1,2,9
X	WO 84 00982 A (FFA FLUG-UND FAHRZEUGWERKE AG) 15 March 1984 (1984-03-15) cited in the application page 10; claim 1 ---	1
A	GB 1 022 751 A (DURAND & HUGUENIN A.G.) page 10; example 26 ---	1,5
A	US 3 917 887 A (F.P. STILLER) 4 November 1975 (1975-11-04) column 7, line 25 - line 41 column 17 -column 19; claim 1 ---	1

Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

Patent family members are listed in annex.

### \* Special categories of cited documents :

- \*A\* document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
- \*E\* earlier document but published on or after the international filing date
- \*L\* document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
- \*O\* document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
- \*P\* document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

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